

THE
COMPLAINT
OF THE
POOR

Being Deprived of their former
way of Living, by the Un-
charitable, lately
made against
Begging.

The first Cry.

*Nil habet infelix Paupertas durius in se
Quam quod ridiculus homines facit ----- Juven.*

Printed for the Godly, to Consider
the Poor's Case. 1700.



The Pitiful Complaint of the P O O R.

YE Rulers all both Great and Smal,
me think ye stand no aw,
To trouble and oppress the Poor,
by this Your new coin'd Law:
In *Judah* and in *Israel*
of old have Poor Men been,
Who were allow'd by Divine Law
Fields and Vineyards to glean.
They might not wholly reap their Corn,
as ye may read and see,
But part of them leave to the Poor:
that he may live with thee.
If they by chance forget o're night
on Fields a Sheaf of Corn,
Into that sheaf the Poor had right,
to bring it home the morn.
And such as could not see nor walk,
we read have likewise been,
Who begged by the High way side,
because they could not Glean.
But now, alas! that Law's made void,
the loss is ours therefore,
they'll neither suffer us to glean,
nor beg from door to door.

Deut.

24:

20. 19

Levitic

19, 9

& 23

22:

John

9. 8.

From

4 *The Poors Complaint.*

From Poor Mens cryes they stop their ears,
and close their Eyes do they,
Their stubborn words to Beggars tears;
their hardned hearts bewary,
To some they gave a little thing,
their Favourites yet more:
But such their Wildoms who displease,
their Names quite out they leese.

Judas pretends more Charitie,
than any of the Rest,

John 12
5.

Yet was a Traitor in his heart,
for all that he protest:

He was a Thief, and bear the Bag,
and all that was therein:

But yet he car'd not for the Poor,
the greater was his sin.

Ye Kirk-men who did undertake,
us Beggars to maintain;

One day, be sure, account ye'll make
what Stewards ye have been,

Gods Law Commands, we shall not Steal *Exod*
it's Just and Equal too, *20:*

Your Law commands, we shall not Begg
alas! what shall we do?

For Cold and Hunger cause our grief,
'gainst which we cannot Fend:

If shortly we get not Relief,
our Lives must take an end,

Yea

our Willdoms now have railed Stents,
which sore the People grieve,
And such as pay not willingly,
from them ye poynd and Rieve.
But we would ask at you wi h leave
Precept or Practice found,
Where ever Charity was forc'd,
or yet the Poor was bound.
Begin, Sirs, at the Genesis,
read all the Bible throw,
Find Precept or Example there,
that will your Deeds allow,
For Christ who is the Truth, hath said, *John*
we alwise Poor shall have, 6:12
Who from our Doors shall never cease,
lupply from us to crave.
But now, forsooth, your Willdoms say,
tha ye will us Discharge:
And for our Maintenance cause men
their Charity enlarge,
And force them pay under the pain
of poynding and of more,
The like in Scotland was not seen
these Thousand years before:
To force men pay unto the poor
more than Abilitie;
Let all the world Hear and Judge
if this be Charity!

Th' Afflicted's caule God will maintain, *Psal:*
and right of all his poor: *140:12*

Our caule is good; God Mighty is,
our victory is sure.

The Poor shall not cease from the Land,
although at them ye grieve:

Then open, Sirs, your Scattering Hand,
and grudge not when ye give.

For he that giveth to the poor
unto the Lord doth lend:

Prov:
16:17.

On all that Mans Affairs, be sure
GOD will his Blessing send.

Let such as will no Mercy shew,
for Justice them prepare,

James
2:13.

Without a mixture, that's for you,
as Scripture doth declare.

Beware then of our Guiltless Blood,
and let the Poor alone:

There will be Beggars in the Land
when ye are dead and gone.

And Thieves and Rogues will never cease
for ought that ye can do;

The Godly poor if ye them wrong,
Judgment will follow you.

Since Widows, Poor and Fatherless
so much of you complain,

Then Gracious Lord who sees their case;
their Rights judge and mainain.

That

The Poors Complaint.

7

12

That Noble Grace of *Hamilton*,
She gives much to the Poor:
If she knew how its Distribute,
She would be griev'd sure.

All that her Grace doth in this Land;
She doth it for the best,
But knows not how the poor are starv'd,
yet people are oppress'd.

If any ask, what way oppress?
Or how this shall be kent?

The poor among them alwise Beg
though People pay the Stent

An half penny for every day,
on some they do allow,

And other some an Achilon,
judge ye if they be fow,

When poor Folke Begg, they answer them,
ye shall get nought from me,

I'm not a fool to pay a fine,
for giving your supplie.

Yet others will some Favour shew,
though it be very small,

And say, thou'st not at my door die,
when down we're like to fall.

We wander thus from house to house,
when it is dark and late;

We Moun, we Cry, and make a Noise,
no Lodging we can get.

Some

The Poors Complaint.

Some are found dead into the Fields,
 Some swoon upon the Street,
 And other some are starv'd to death,
 for fault of Cloaths and meat;
 Lay down a way us to preserve,
 or else let us alone:

Though we be poor our Blood will cry,
 when we are dead and gone.

The Lord the poor did not forget,
 when he did give the Law,

By Charter Moses then did write,
 we have it yet to shew,

Judicial Laws shuld be observ'd,
 good Morals where they teach:

And what they say contrate to these,
 doth no mans Conscience reach.

This Foolish Law can find no ground
 except what's very bare

For Law and Gospel both do sound,
 against it every where;

Christ saith, a Trumpet do not sound, *Matt.*
 when Charity ye give: *6:2;*

But now a Set of men is found,
 will not let Neighbours live.

Except that they the Trumpet Blow,
 they'll blow them to the Horn,
 And poid their Plates and Soups also,
 if they their Orders scorn,

Again,

The Poors Complaint.

9

Again, let not your left Hand know
what your right Hand doth give, *Matts*
6: 3

When ye your Charity bestow
give freely, do not grieve.

But now mens Names enroled be:
(ye know, it's best be sure)

That all their Neighbours hear and see
what they give to the poor.

Once more, the Scripture doth advise *2 Cor*
8: 12

In giving Alms, or otherwise
our Charity we Spill.

If there be first a willing mind,
it is enough we hear,

To give according as we find
our want or wealth can bear.

Because, he saith, a Cup of Water *Matts*
bestow'd upon the poor, *10: 42*

When honest hearts can give no better,
shall be rewarded sure.

But now we want our sop and bit,
which often did us good,

Yet Givers not oppress'd by it,
we'll make this understood;

Cold Pottage, Broth, or Bits of Bread,
where Cats perhaps had piss,

Did very oft relieve our need,
and yet were never miss:

Yes

Yea Six did gave us Meat and Drink,
where one gave us a boddle;

So these new Beggar Laws, we think,
bred in an empty noddie.

For some do see since for the poor
they rais'd this foolish Stent,

Their Meat was blest to them before,
but now a Curse is in't.

And some for shame have promis'd more
than well they can allow.

Their Stocks exhausted are to lore
and almost spent we now:

Yet strive to keep a fair out side
for fear their Credits crack,

And Labour thus their case to hide,
least all should go to Wrack.

But these Corrosive Stents do gnaw
their purses to the bone,

This mischief fram'd into a Law
hurts not the poor alone.

The Scripture saith, with hold not good *Prov;*
from him to whom it's due: *3: 17:*

This passage now is understood
and done by very few.

That help ye ought us, Sirs, we might
from this place fully prove,

Not only from the Law of Right,
but from the Law of Love,

But

But yet, we fear, some Churle might say,
proud Beggars get you gone :

What interest in my means have they?
are not my goods my own?

I got my wealth by no mans wrong,
I earn'd it with my sweat,
should Strangers then come in among,
my Fortune and Estate?

And Lazie, Lusie Rogues, should spend,
my substance and my store,
Who seek no Honest way to lend,
but Skip from door to door.

Such Gaber-Lunzie men as they,
no Charity should have,
But whip them twice or thrice a day,
when they their Dinner crave.

If this were done, this Land might soon,
from Beggars cries be free,
And Scotland yet might change her tune.
if this we once might see.

It's true, sir, you may please your self,
with such a merry cant,
Because you have the penny pelf,
which poor men now do want,
But had we Money in our purse,
then we might Reason thus,
And Rich men we could plague and Curle;
who now do hunger us.

Come

Come change your Lots a while with ours,
since ye our case envy?
Take ye our Denners, give us yours,
the best way is to try,
Come every cold and stormy night,
give us your Chamber free,
Take ye the sheep-houle never dight,
or take the Barn or Bire,
Come take our Tatter'd Loufie Rags,
we'le better Cloaths put on:
Then, Sirs, we fear for all your brags,
ye soon would change your tone.
Your well fed Cheeks, we fear, should then
grow pale as ours are now,
When Death his picture with a pen,
had drawn upon your brow.
Were ye but Lodged half a year,
as some of us have been,
In houses wanting fire; we fear,
a change would soon be seen,
It's ealy, Sirs, for you to Crack,
and prate against the poor;
Your Reasons are not worth a plack,
in Gods sight, we are sure.
Ye say that poor men should not Beg,
lest Rich men take offence,
That Reason is not worth a legg,
to any man of sense,

When

The Poors Complaint.

13

When Jesus went from Jericho,
(the story well is known)

Mark,
9. 49

Great multitudes did with him go,
as Scripture hath us shown.

Blind Bartimeus got his sight,
but no Reproot at all,

For Begging, though the Lord had Right,
him to account to call,

From whence an Observation we,
may draw from our Relief,

Which may for Consolation be,
'gainst poverty and grief.

Poor *Lazarus*, Lepers, Bedlams, Blind;
and other sorts also,

Without a Cure we alwise find,
did never from him go,

Whereas the Lawyers and the Lairds,
and others like the same,

Who tempted Christ by Flattering Faids,
went oft times as they came.

If some of us be lame and halt,
and so unfit to dig,

Why should your Wisdoms then find fault
with us becaule we big,

If some of us be come to years,
and yet we nothing have,

Should ye bring down our Old gray hairs,
with Hunger to the Graves.

Again

Again, if some of us be young,
(and younger none can wish)

Alas ! shall we be alwise dung,
with hunger in our dish ?

If some of us have held a house,
with grief and care perplex,

With less meat than would starve a mouse :

Sirs, what shall we do next ?

For if we take the Prick and Sheet,
and Staff into our Hands,

We dare not now be seen on Street
in City or in Lands.

For by and by *John Scourge the Poor* :
or else the *Hangmans Son*,

Doth Cudgel us from Door to Door
as we had Mischief done.

So we who sometimes went to Bliss,
the Rich Man as our Father,

Are thus provoked now to wish,
them Hanged all together.

Where its deserved all Confess,
the Poor-mans Curle is sad

'And often hits, Sirs, ye may guess
Oppression makes us madd.

We gather Weeds amongst the Corn,
this is but small Relict,

'And yet for pity we get Scorn,
which adds into our grief ;

Such

Such filthy Trash corrupts our Blood
our Humors poisons too,
Yet doth our Stomack little good
Ah! Sirs, what shall we do!
That is true the Land knows well;
we speak it as it is,
Yea some who neither begg nor Steal;
have follow'd us in this.
Who such a sobber shift did take,
when Richer sort did Sleep.
We think such sad Complaints should make
even Hearts of Stone to Weep.
And this through Summers scorching heat;
our way these Years hath been
We thought that all things tasted sweet,
if they were only green,
Ay waiting till *Autumnus* should
make Fruits in case to pull:
if that were come we thought we would;
get Pats and Pockets full.
Some went Northward to *Falkirk*,
from thence down to *Daderffe*,
And then when once the Night grew Mirk,
we spied down through the *Kerse*.
His spot doth lye like *Goshen* Land
both good and fertile is,
nature it self cannot Command,
a Richer soil than this.

But

But yet we need not like it well,
we got not leave to lark;
Because *Egyptians* here do dwell
more Savage than the Turk.
These Sons of *Anack* did us scare
and chase away with ease,
Who watch like *Judas* Men of War,
to keep us from the Peace.
We silly Souls came creeping home,
and this was all we got.
But all did not return: for some
did fall upon the spot,
And did not rise, nor never will,
until the Judgement day,
When Rich shall see, Poor-men to kill,
hath been no pleasant play.
These Brosie Fellows thought that we
were all well fill'd with Meat
As they, when every Man may see
we nothing have to Eat,
Our Harvest, Winter, and our Spring
and Summers are alike:
We can foresee no other thing
but Die, Sirs, by a Dyke!
But yet our Gentlemen and Lairds,
who cares not for the Poor,
Can spend their Guinea's at the Cards
or yet upon a Whore,

While

While not reform'd from Drink and Play,
and such vain Conversation,
How can your Wildoms think or say
this is a Reformation?

Kirk men who should the Poor preserve
who to their Cure belong;

Have found a way the poor to starve
Sirs, is not this a Wrong?

They call us idle Vagrant Lowns,
when at their Gares we yell;

And some of them do knock our crowns
although we dare not tell.

Sirs, ye may think this a Lie,
and forg'd out of envy,

But yet it can instructed be,
if ye the matter try.

But what's the hazard how we die,
by Hang-man, or by Priests?

We will no more regarded be
then we were Brutal Beasts.

When thus our Souls wear out at last,
they lay us on a Barrow,

Us and our Rags in holes they cast,
thus ends our Earthly sorrow:

But well are they who dy'd before:
for they who stay behind,

Must dy a Thousand Deaths and more,
while thus with hunger pin'd.

B

Some

Some got a Three-pence in a Week,
 and other some got less,
 When Meal gave Twenty pence a Peck
 how we liv'd ye may guess;
 It is no wonder, we Confess,
 Your Projects backward go;
 For poor mens bowels do not bless
 as they had wont to do.

It's true, the *Bishops* as a Weed
 from this Church cast ye have
 Yea *Bishop Weed*; believe indeed,
 keeps some folk from their grave;
 For were it not that Stinking Weed,
 our Pits play very thin,
 Yea nothing, Sirs, our Guts to feed
 at all would be therein.

But *Prelacy* on *English* Ground
 brings plenty as we see
 While *Bishop Weed*, as we have found,
 brought *SCOTLANDS* Miseric.
 Now since that Noxious Weed is cast
 out of the *LORDS* Vineyard,
 What can the Causes be at last,
 but both us not regard?

These years of Dearth we may be sure
 have not come on by guesse,
 Judge as ye will: we who are poor
 at least can think no less,

men are complaining now of dayes.
of sharpnels of the Rod ;
Yet few discerning how their wayes
displeasing are to GOD.

Of many Causes, ye may say,
it's one among the rest,
That we poor Beggars, once a day,
no thankfulness exprest ;
When White and Gray, Meal packs were
and we no hardship felt, full,
With GOD who gave us wealth at will
ingrately we Dealt.

We grant that is a sober Truth,
though Jocundly exprest,
But yet to stop the Beggars mouth,
do not conceal the rest :
If ye the Argument retort,
believe it, so can we :
For poor folk, when they came a thort,
no other thing cou'd see.

In stead of Bibles in your hand,
we saw a stock of Cards,
As fitter than the Ten Commands
for Gentlemen, and Lairds :
And some of you have play'd so long,
and Beasted it, we see,
No sober man comes you among
but must infected be.

In

~~And of GOD, ye Doubter, Sirs~~
(now tell us if we lie)

So that Religion being starv'd
at last did from you flee;

In stead of Prayers and of praise,
your Throats did sound like Hell,
With Blaphemies both Nights and Dayes,
and words we will not tell,

Ye persecuted Honest folks,
who could not do as ye,
Yet think them now such silly Couks,
as thus deluded be:

Ye think because ye come and hear,
they should repute you Saints,
Who fill'd the Land but t' other year
with all their sad Complaints.

Your Doubler, Sirs, lets out and in,
as selfish interest goes,
Though for a while ye do begin
as Friends, ye'll end as Foes.

What ye have done Remember then,
against both Bond and Vow:
We're sure ye will prove honest men,
e're some believe you now.

There are among you, Sirs, who think
your selves far been, we're sure:
Who yet can Dance, and Spew, and Drink
and Curle, and Play the Whore.

Of

The Poors Complaint.

21

Of old the Curious Beshshemites
by Fifty Thousand tell:

1 Sam:
6: 19:

If so, ye furious Ishmaelites,
what waits you who can tell?

Ye who like Edonis wotull brood
Gods People Captive led,

Obadiab
throughout.

Who in the Crows wayes often stood
to hew them down that fled,

To pick up such as did remain
who raised the Hue and Cry,

In stead of grief, whose hearts were fain
at their Calami.y.

Ye Gentlemen to save your Riggs,
ye Countrey men your Hogs,

Lest greater men should judge you Whiggs
did hunt like *Spaniel Dogs*.

That Principle which ye cry'd down,
in former Empror's Reign,

Your Wildoms now are made to own,
but with a worse design.

Your ill railed Fortunes some men lee,
this day are mouldring down:

And otherwise how can it be,
since GOD on them doth frown?

That man who gave the Covenant,
but from his hand to burn;

Yet GOD his Judgments did not want,
his means to overturn.

These

These stately Lands in Sixteen hours,
to Rubbish turned were :

Then tell us, Sirs, pray what is yours
that Wrath ye should not fear ?

Upon that Fire as Various men,
their Sentiments exprest,

We Beggars our pollocks then
brought forth among the rest.

They clos'd there Ports against the Poor ;
and let at them a Guard :

To keep the Beggars out : be sure,
this was a due Reward.

Edinburgh that might get far more ill,
than Beggars many one,

'Twixt Abby, and the Castle-Hill,
by Begging could have done.

The place where first the fire began,
was where they sold the Meal :

Where Mongers many Curles wan,
made many Begg and steal.

But here it's best due bonds to keep,
our Tongues should speak with fear ;
Gods Judgments are so great a deep,
we rather shall forbear.

Besides, we do not thoroughly know,
what Covenants do mean ?

How far their Obligations go ?
nor why thy fram'd have been ?

For Pulpits gave no Certain sound,
that Ignorance to cure;

Their wisdoms other work have found,
to Persecute the Poor.

Mean time their fancy strangely vents,
as oft they find occasion,

To tattle ov'r their Sentiments,
of former Reformation.

Some call our Vowes the Bonds of strife:
(which Young Men chiefly do,)

Who scarce have read them all their Life,
and yet Reformers too.

Though others or them all are clear,
(if Men may them believe,)

Their Burial never brought a tear,
nor did their breach them grieve:

Yea some professors will not want,
whatever may be fall,

Their tippling Kan for Covenant
Church, Government and all.

Some grant the Covenants were good
and therefore should be lov'd,

Yet ill Manag'd occasion'd blood,
Experience hath prov'd:

For still Malignants took a Rant,
and lakeles blood did spill

When we renew'd the Covenant,
and this ye know did ill.

Therefore

Therefore our Widdoms judge it best
as matters now do stand,
To Bury them, and let them rest,
and not disturb the Land,
Yea we resolve, for good nor ill,
not to displease the Pow'rs:
But let the Great men take their will
since we cannot get ours.

If Parliament now when it sits,
Should us command to Swear,
The Covenant: why, then it fits
our minds, the Case is clear.
But if their Widdoms good shall find,
(as no doubt but they will)
No Acts against it to rescind,
but let them all stand still.

What would Schismatics have us do,
who see the case thus goes?

We want both Will and Courage too,
their doings to oppose.

We do confels, its bloody cryes,
which mens wit now disdains,
Increase our fears, it yet may rise,
and pay us for our pains.

These Covenants seem bits of paper,
if Justice were come forth.

Their price, we fear, prove little cheaper
than some mens necks are worth.

But

But yet when all is come and gone;
it's best to hold our peace,
For other Help we see there's none
in such a ticklish case.

We should learn wit from what is past,
and still more Pââkie grow,
So what we have, we may keep fast,
it is enough ye know;
This is a Controverted point,
'twixt us and other some:
But Unity we're not disjoint,
whatever case may come.

Some say, there are some faults to mend;
which may be helped too:
But what! Complaints will never end,
what therefore shall we do?
Shall men of wit go draw to Factions?
then shortly all should be
In Hurly-burlies and Distractions:
the thing is clear ye see.

Whither such Tales be hot or Cold,
we Poor Folk cannot tell:
Or if their Arguments do hold,
these Reasons who Retell,
By saying, Truth gives alwise Beauty,
to Union where it is:
Conspiracy is not a Duty,
in such a Course as this?

It is well known to all these Lands,
 what we Engag'd to do;
 How Scotland swore with lifted hands,
 States-Men, and Church-Men too,
 To own that Covenanted cause,
 with Life, Goods, and Estate,
 Which had the Sanction of the Laws:
 which now are out of date:
 How Resolutions brought in,
 (whence sprang the Churches tears)
 The cause of all, the Noise and din,
 hath been these many years.
 Malignants then, that bloody crew,
 by this so proud were grown,
 Our Covenants they brunt: and flew,
 all who the same did own.
 Yet all they did had not the force,
 mens Courage to impair,
 Till some devis'd that *Trajan* horse,
 Indulgence for a laare:
 Then *Gilead Balm* came to cure,
 the Church of her distress,
 And Coy-Ducks did the wild allure,
 and gain'd ay more or less.
 Malignants then sent forth *Dragoons*,
 brought poor men in as prizes;
 Professing *Presbyterian* Lowns
 did sit on their *Ashizes*,

The Poors Complaint.

27

Yea Ministers (alas therefore)
herein gave great offence,
By growing silent more and more
With prudence for pience.

When Curates Sermons did no good
to any who went near them,
But did deprive poor Souls of food,
yet Ministers did hear them ;
If every one had done as they,
and made no greater stirs :

In what case had we been this day,
by all appearance, Sirs ?

Ye prove, or ye assert it rather,
ye now say what ye will :

Ye are mistaken Ghostly Fathers,
but do not take it ill :

These men who have not yet comply'd,
Schismaticks cannot be,
For if the case were duely try'd,
impartial men might see ;

The Arguments for your defence,
which in this case ye bring,
To thinking men bear as good sense,
ye worse in every thing :

As put the case, that Glasgow steeple
should in a windie night,
Fall down on Houses and the People,
which were a dreadfull sight.

Yet

Yet confidently cry, a Hollow,
these Stones which yet do stand,
Schismatics are, that will not follow:
let's all go hand in hand.

It's true some Conscience makes no bones;
if thereby gain they get,
To lift these old Foundation stones
our first Reformers let.

Yea will Malignants Justify,
rather than such as stood
For truth and Mankinds Liberty
resisting unto blood;
And could not at Defection wink
as others basely did;

We need not prove it: For we think
these things cannot be hid.

Such tales as these we sometimes hear
when we a Begging go;
And yet indeed we ate not clear
in any of the two:

For no man's ill that's good to us,
profess, Sirs, what he will:
It's well if we could purchase thus
our Backs and Bellies full,

Most part of us do where we Lodge
comply with the Good-man:
And of his Graces do not Judge
whether he bless or ban,

If he bid fill our empty Dishes,
and in a house us lay,
We give him many empty Wishes,
and so we come our way,
But now its time we end our speech,
within a verse or two;
It's long enough to cight a breech,
the way we fear it go,
If our Complaints no hearing get,
for all that we can say,
We must content our selves and wait,
untill another day.

This is indeed our day of Hunger,
which nips and bites us sore:
The day of Thirst to come is longer,
to some for evermore,
We knew Objections that are brought,
should have been answer'd here;
Which to have done we also thought;
but yet we must forbear.

It's neither, Sirs, for want of Rime,
nor yet for want of Reason:
But we must choose another time,
more now is out of Season,
Yet this may be a help to some,
to light their pipe, *si placet*;
Since it a proverb is become,
pauper ubique jacet:

F I N I S